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AIR POUCH

Department of State

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INFO:

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" Baghdad

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2011.6-1

FROM:

Amembassy BEIRUT

DATE: November 14, 1962

SUBJECT:

U.S. Retention of Guantanamo Base  
Is Difficult to Sell

Depairtel 224, November 10, 1962

In all honesty, the Embassy must report that the arguments marshalled in Depairtel 224 as to why the United States Navy should stay at Guantanamo are not very impressive in this part of the world. People here remember Suez too well, and later on Shahrar and Bizerte, where the world, including the United States, upheld the principle that nations have the sovereign right to ask that foreign bases be removed. Arguments of long-term treaties, unrepresentative governments, and the general unwillingness to the world of such bases are of little avail. Middle Easterners in particular are skeptical that in this day of long range aircraft and missiles there is any true American defense need served by a base only a hundred miles or so from United States shores.

The Embassy believes the only point in the reference telegram which may hold up here is that the subject of the Guantanamo Base is a separate issue which is irrelevant to the fundamental issue in Cuba, i.e., the removal of the Soviet offensive threat. This argument, however, implicitly suggests that a day might come when the United States might conclude that Guantanamo is no longer necessary to Free World defense plans. It would be the Embassy's hope that such a determination could and would be made if and when the Castro regime disappears.

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From \_\_\_\_\_

Beirut, despite the formidability of the task, the Government may be assured that the Embassy will do its best, utilizing the substance in the reference telegram, to promote a favorable Lebanese disposition with regard to our Guantanamo base. Fortunately, there is not at present any great emotion in Lebanon on this issue.

*AMM*

Armin H. Meyer

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